

Exhibit No. 6
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Montana Administration Committee
Helena, Montana

Dear members of the State Administration Committee,

I am writing you to oppose HB30 which mandates closing voter registration at 5:00PM on the Friday before election day.

Not allowing voters to register up to and including election day is a disservice to Montana voters. I have worked on elections in Montana since 1972. Our job as election judges is to make sure all eligible voters are given the opportunity to exercise their right to vote. As a Chief Judge in Flathead County I have never heard any judge say that election day registration was an inconvenience or too much to handle.

The only problem we have had recently is that large numbers of new voters who have registered to vote at the Driver Exam Stations have not had their registration information show up on the Present Register. These people (many of them younger, first time voters) show up to vote *believing they are properly registered* only to find out there is no record of the registration. Although this should not happen AND needs to be corrected, it is easy to resolve on election day -- if election day registration is allowed!

We need to make voting easier not harder. Why not expand opportunities to register to all state and county offices? Registration forms are available online (<http://sos.mt.gov/elections/forms/voters/register.pdf>) and any county /state employee could assist persons wanting to register by printing out the form and mailing it to the appropriate county election department.

We need to find ways to make it easier for first time voters and disadvantaged voters to register and to vote. Many Montanans travel long distances to vote. Many rural voter even travel long distances for mail pickup. Many of our older citizens no longer drive and must arrange transportation to their polling place. Many students are away from home attending our colleges and universities and working long hours to pay for it. For all these voters Election Day registration is often the difference between voting or being left out of the process.

Election Day registration and voting is NOT an inconvenience to the election department or precinct judges. IT IS very convenient for voters. Retain this option so we can better serve the people of Montana.

If we can't allow election day registration a better option would be to change to voting by mail for all state elections using the current absentee voting system.

Sincerely yours,

Theresa P. Conner